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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Vladimir Putin of
Russia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: United States
The President
Joshua Bolten, Chief of Staff
Steve Hadley, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
John Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State
Judy Ansley, Special Assistant to the
President and Senior Director for European
Affairs
Nikolai Sorokin, Interpreter

Russia
Vladimir Putin, President
Sergey Prikhodko, Assistant of the President
Igor Shuvalov, Sherpa
Sergey Kislyak, Deputy of the Foreign
Affairs Minister
Igor Neverove, Note Taker
Sergey Gogin, Interpreter

DATE, TIME Thursday, June 7, 2007, 3:20 - 4:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: Heiligendamm, Germany, G-8 Conference Hall

The President: I told Vladimir I'm looking forward to having
him to my family's place in Maine. He said, "I'm afraid you're
going to strangle me." But he's the judo expert, not me. (U)

President Putin: I think the situation there will be disarming.
It's hard to fight when you're in a warm family environment.
(U)

The President: Particularly with my mother watching. (U)

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President Putin: For me, it's a source of great pride. (U)

The President: Let's start with North Korea -- you raised the issue over lunch. Your concerns, I think we've addressed them with your bank receiving the money. It's a technicality. (S)

President Putin: My concern is simple. Americans are tricky people, and we are just simple people. You have legislation, the Patriot Act, which prohibits entering into financial relationships with North Korea. We have apprehensions even if we send letters asking for this to the State Department, if our financial institution allocates money to North Korea, they will fall under sanctions. (S)

The President: I understand -- it's a legitimate concern. (U)

President Putin: Because all the letters from the State Department are at lower levels than the Act. We're ready to help, but we want to clear up this matter. (S)

National Security Advisor Hadley: I've been talking to Secretary Rice and Secretary Paulson at the direction of the President. You will get a letter of assurance from the Treasury and Justice Departments, on behalf of the United States Government. It will make clear there will be no sanctions for any violation of U.S. law, and it specifically mentions the Patriot Act. It's being worked with lawyers representing the Russian bank, and we think it will give you the assurances you need. (S)

President Putin: I should first of all look at how to bypass sections of the Act which makes the letters lower than the Act. It's not a matter of government -- imagine the legal case, especially in the civil area. Our banks working on the terrorist act in the United States encounter problems with civil cases and they forget about all assurances you give and take up a case against us. (S)

National Security Advisor Hadley: We'll take a look at it. I'm not sure who's in a position to bring a civil suit. We think we have a broad assurance that applies to all parts of the government, including the Justice Department. (S)

President Putin: You should clearly understand we are ready. The only thing we need to find is the legal formula to protect our bank in the future. (S)

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The President: Thank you. We fully understand. This has to work for the North Korean deal; if not, we'll find a South Korean bank. I think we can get it done. I'd assume if your lawyers representing the bank are happy -- that should get it done. (S)

President Putin: I think we now need to talk a bit about the missile defense problem. We need to say something afterwards, and I agree we need to find something positive to say. I won't start from scratch, but I need to explain our position. I have already said by the conviction of our military experts the deployment of missile defense in Europe is aimed at constraining the military potential of Russia. When you withdrew from the ABM Treaty (Anti-Ballistic Missile), I told you that in that case we would have to do something to develop our own system. We didn't have the money to do this, but we built enough missiles to overcome your system. You told us we weren't enemies; we accept that. To preserve the balance, we have taken steps to preserve our position. (S)

What your experts are proposing now -- to place missile defense at our borders -- is aimed at nothing but the nuclear potential of Russia since there are no other objectives, and there won't be any in the near future. That undermines the security of the Russian Federation. That is an objective fact. The information system will add up to a global missile system of the United States. Our experts believe that on this, a lot of interceptors can be added in different regions -- in land, on ships, in the air. (S)

In the coming years, we don't see any threats from Iran. The missiles you're trying to defend yourself from are now non-existent in Iran. Now they have missiles with maybe a range of 1,300 kilometers (km); in 2015, maybe they'll have 2,000 km. For them to threaten Europe, they need a range of 4,500-5,000 km. Let's assume they're evil. Indeed, they are tricky, and we don't know their plans, and we need to think about the future beyond 2015. To have a common idea of the missile threat, to understand how missile defense technology will develop, and to develop the means of defense together, we need to engage other countries. Of course in separate segments, we need to involve Europe, and we listened to Secretary Gates about China. This cooperation should be extensive between us, but cooperation that means we would train those who would launch the U.S. missile defense system is not realistic. (S)

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We don't see the necessity to act as you do, but we share your concerns. We have a specific proposal about the first stages. You know about our radar station in Azerbaijan called Gabala. It is active, and it is aimed at those countries from where in your point of view the threat to the United States and Europe is emanating. We're ready to consider the possibility of giving you information from this radar station. And not just transfers in a year's time, but to do it automatically and each time. Our experts will decide how to do it. If this is accepted by the American team, the third site in Europe will be absolutely unnecessary. And if the Iranian missile threat ever becomes tangible, you can deploy your ships with Aegis to deploy to this region. (S)

Look here (shows the President a map) -- it fully covers the region you're interested in. If you draw in the Aegis system, then unlike the plan you are suggesting, this system will work more efficiently since it will destroy missiles at the booster stage. That means debris of the missiles won't fall on European states. In this case, the system will cover not part of the European continent but all of it, and the debris will fall here to the ocean and miss Europe. This means that in this case, we will carry out our commitment not to aim missiles. We agree about that, and we are honoring our commitments. (S)

We are concerned with two other issues that we believe are threats to strategic stability. First, the development of antiballistic missiles in outer space. If this is developed against Iranian missiles, this suggestion excludes the need to place any systems in outer space because, I reiterate, they will destroy missiles at the boost phase. You don't need to wait for missiles to reach outer space. (S)

The other issue is not directly linked to missile defense but greatly affects the entire system of international security. The development of an ABM system makes the time lag very small for taking decisions. If the United States were to equip strategic missiles with non-nuclear power, it would be important for us to say from where it's launched and whether it's nuclear or not, and we'll have only a couple of minutes to decide. Secretary Lavrov talked about this with Rumsfeld and he agreed. (S)

We realize what purpose is needed -- to fight terrorists hiding in the caves or mountains. We understand all this and know it's not aimed at us. But we think it will increase the risk of unintended actions. Before doing this, we need to discuss and

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(agree among ourselves. If we agree on everything, we'll not only comply with our statement on non-targeting, we will not place missile capabilities in Kaliningrad and along our border.

(~~N~~)

We would like to draw to your attention that we have honored all of our commitments to conventional arms in Europe. We have withdrawn all of them from Europe. In Georgia, we have honored all of our commitments, but in response we see you are enhancing your bases. It's hard for us to explain this to our public. Everyone has an idea about the mounting threat. But we'll talk about that later because I have more revolutionary proposals to make. Just to finalize with missile defense, to be frank, we would not like to see that under the cover of consultations with the United States, the United States begins preparations to deploy a system in Europe. We know the realities. Let's assume Iran will develop missiles we fear. How will they appear? They need to be developed and tested. Once they carry out the first test, we'd realize that. From the first test to full operation of the missiles, 4 to 5 years would elapse. If we do not agree, but I doubt that, then what to do? You can easily put missile defense wherever you want. There will be enough time. There would be 4 to 5 years before a system is fully operational. You can deploy any system in that time. (~~N~~)

(The President: Thank you. I must confess I didn't realize the harshness of your reaction to the system. That's my fault. To be perfectly honest, it caught me by surprise. I'm not surprised that you react firmly, since you're a firm leader. I am surprised that you view this as a direct threat, and I take you at your word. It's from your heart, and I take it seriously. It's an interesting idea, the only problem is I'm not technically able to accept it. My question is, does it make sense to put everything on the table and have the relevant experts look at everything? For example, is the radar in Azerbaijan the right one? It would assure the people of the United States and Russia who are not wanting us to create conflict. And we should literally share technology and ideas about technology. For example, our Aegis may eventually be able to shoot down a launch, but it's not technically capable to now, and we ought to share that with you. And we may never be able to develop that technology. I think it's in your interest to know where we are, and I'm willing to share it with you. I don't view you as the enemy. Maybe one idea is to go out and say we've shared ideas, and will put together a strategic group to examine them. It's a very interesting idea, but I can't accept it now because I don't understand it. (~~N~~)

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I was asked yesterday about Russian targeting of European cities, and I said I can't imagine a circumstance in which Russia would shoot them -- it's not in your nature. We're not at war with Russia. We're friends. Maybe I'm naïve, but you have me for another 18 months. The other thing, this system will take a while to develop. We're at the initial stages only. This is the kind of thing we should share with you. (S)

President Putin: George, of course we don't want to target anyone in the United States and Europe. We want to be friends and develop normal economic and political relations. We'd like to come closer together with the United States and Europe. But if you'd like to push us to target Europe, this is the right path to follow. It is already creating tension. You say you're not an expert on military things; I'm not an expert either. My generals and experts on military things came to me and said, "As soon as our American friends implement this, they'll have the illusion they devalue our nuclear potential." This breaks the belt on which the world is hinged. It has no personal aspect. Once you create such a threat, you're sure you don't want it. You should hear our concerns, to see if we can protect ourselves in a different way. (S)

The President: Do you mind having a strategic dialogue with our generals so they can discuss and resolve differences? Maybe we can say that you expressed concerns, made a proposal; maybe we can get our generals together. I can say we respect you, and we can resolve tensions. When we argue it makes people nervous. There's no reason for that. (S)

President Putin: I agree. (U)

The President: Do you mind going outside and saying this to the world press? (U)

President Putin: Okay. We can talk about other issues in Maine. (U)

-- End of Conversation --